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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
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МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ АМНИСТИЯ
منظمة العفو الدولية
國際特赦組織

URGENT ACTION

EXTERNAL **AI Index: ASA 21/42/97**

EXTRA 88/97 **Fear of torture** **19 June 1997**

EAST TIMOR

Virgilio dos Santos Pinto
Cancio da Costa
Gil Fernandes

Lorencio Monteiro
Sergio Paul Dias
Aurelio Mendes
Jose da Costa
Joao da Costa
Aurelio
Aleco Neves

Three men, Virgilio dos Santos Pinto, Cancio da Costa and Gil Fernandes, arrested on or around 14 June 1997, are believed to be in military custody in the town of Los Palos, East Timor, where they are at serious risk of torture or ill-treatment. Another seven men, Lorencio Monteiro, Sergio Paul Dias, Aurelio Mendes, Jose da Costa, Joao da Costa, Aurelio and Aleco Neves, are also reported to have been recently arrested in the region of Los Palos. There is no information on their whereabouts, raising fears that they too may be at risk of torture or ill-treatment.

Virgilio dos Santos Pinto, Cancio da Costa and Gil Fernandes were detained by members of the Special Forces, *Kopassus*, during house-to-house searches by the Indonesian security forces in the village of Soru, approximately five kilometres from Los Palos. The searches followed a series of attacks on military and civilian targets by *Falintil* - the armed opposition group fighting for East Timorese independence. The three men were taken to the *Kopassus* detention centre in Los Palos, known locally as *Mess Gula*. Amnesty International has received testimonies in the past from people who have been tortured or ill-treated in this detention centre and believes that it is likely that the three men arrested from Soru will be facing such treatment. They are not believed to have been permitted access to lawyers or to members of their families.

The precise reasons for the arrest of all ten men is unclear, but it is believed to be in relation to the attacks by *Falintil*.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent weeks there has been an increase in reported attacks by *Falintil* against military and government targets. Over 40 people, including civilians, members of the armed forces, the police force and of *Falintil*, have been killed during the attacks.

Amnesty International condemns the attacks on civilians by *Falintil*. However, the organization is concerned that retaliation by the Indonesian security forces may spread beyond those directly responsible for the killings and result in the arrest of people who have been involved only in peaceful activities in support of East Timorese independence.

Since the attacks the military authorities are believed to have arrested over 100 individuals, many of whom have been released after short periods in detention.

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Torture or ill-treatment of political detainees in East Timor in both police or military custody is routine. The risk is particularly high during interrogation when detainees are commonly denied access to legal counsel and to their families. The risk is further exacerbated by the restrictions placed by the Indonesian authorities on access to East Timor for independent human rights monitors.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/express/airmail letters in Bahasa Indonesia or English or your own language:
- seeking assurances that none of the 10 men believed to have been arrested in the Los Palos region will be subjected to torture or ill-treatment;
- urging the authorities to clarify the whereabouts of Lorencio Monteiro, Sergio Paul Dias, Aurelio Mendes, Jose da Costa, Joao da Costa, Aurelio and Aleco Neves and to clarify the charges against them and also against Virgilio dos Santos Pinto, Cancio da Costa and Gil Fernandes;
- urging the authorities to ensure that all the detainees have access to medical care, to members of their families and to independent legal advisors.

APPEALS TO:

Commander of Special Forces Command
Major General Prabowo Subianto
Panglima Kopassus
Markas Besar ABRI
Cilangkap
Jakarta Timur
Indonesia
Telegrams: Paglima Kopassus, Markas Besar ABRI, Jakarta, Indonesia
Salutation: Dear Major General Prabowo Subianto

Military Commander for Region IX/Udayana
(Covers Bali, Lombok, Nusa Tenggara and East Timor)
Major General Rivai
Pangdam IX Udayana
Markas Besar KODAM IX/Udayana
Denpasar, Bali
Indonesia
Telegrams: Pangdam IX/Udayana, Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia
Salutation: Dear Major General Rivai

COPIES TO:

National Commission on Human Rights
Komisi Nasional Hak Aszi Manusia (Komnas HAM)
Alex Refialy SH
Jalan Dr Antonio de Carvelho
Dili, East Timor
(Indonesia)

and to diplomatic representatives of Indonesia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 20 July 1997.